

**Task Force on Kinship Families  
Responses to Information Requests  
October 19, 2010**

**1. Information was requested from Maine State Housing Authority on protecting a kinship family.** Peter Merrill, Maine State Housing Authority, responded that the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development and MSHA are supportive of kinship families.

- MSHA supports kinship families and has worked with some of the 23 local public housing authorities and some of the landlords who participate in section 8 project-based rental assistance and section 8 housing vouchers to resolve kinship family problems. MSHA willing to continue this work.
- MSHA has stated that HUD acknowledges and supports kinship families.
- But here are a number of issues:
  - HUD has no federal regulations that specifically protect the families.
  - HUD has a regulation that requires all tenants to provide Social Security cards, even children, within 90 days of occupancy.
  - HUD allows landlords to have a lease that restricts the number of people who occupy a unit. Children are not allowed in certain HUD senior housing projects.
  - Local land use ordinances may restrict the number of people who occupy a unit.
  - Federal fair housing and state human rights laws apply to rental housing.

**2. Information was requested on mediation from Nancy Markowitz, Community and Agricultural Mediation, Volunteers of America.** Washington State Department of Social and Health Services contracts with mediation centers for services for mediation on a variety of issues, including family matters and kinship family issues. Data is not available on numbers of cases statewide or on results. Services have been cut back due to fiscal constraints. The cost is \$175 for mediation of a case.

**3. Information was requested from the Judicial Department on the cost of mediation services.** Mary Ann Lynch and Sherry Wilkins provided the following:

- A mediation usually lasts 1.5 to 2 hours.
- The parties pay \$160 for up to 2 sessions, with hardship waivers for people unable to pay. With the number of waivers rising, the program is not financially self-supporting.
- The Judicial Department maintains a list of qualified mediators, does the scheduling, provides the space for mediations and pays the mediators.
- The Probate Court could have access to the same list of mediators, and would need to do the scheduling, provide the space for mediations and pay the mediators.

**4. Information was requested from the Department of Education.**

- Pauline Lamontagne responded that the Due Process Office at DoE provides mediation under the Individuals with Disabilities Act for IDEA issues.
- David Stockford and Ginny Marriner have been discussing documentation of residency for the purposes of school enrollment.

**5. Josh Kroll and Kelly Crane were asked for information on adoption subsidies, best interests of the child, harm and neglect and school enrollment based on power of attorney designation.** See materials distributed by email prior the meeting.